

# Evaluation of Women and Men Professors: How Gender Scripts Affect Students' Assessments

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# Evaluation of Women and Men Professors: How Gender Scripts Affect Students' Assessments

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# Gender Scripts

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- Socially constructed.
- One “performs” a particular script in reaction to the expectation of one’s social situation.
- Performance of gender scripts may include vocal tone, posture, and facial expressions, as well as actions and words.
- Includes the display of specific emotions in reaction to certain situations.

# Emotional Labor

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- Emotional labor: when the performance of certain emotions is part of one's job
- Occupations that have traditionally been held by women (e.g., nurses), often require stereotypic “feminine emotional displays” (e.g., nurturing, soothing)
- Emotional labor is as essential to job as mental or physical labor.

# Emotional Labor and College Teaching

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- This study found that college students place substantial demands for emotional labor on women professors.
- But not on men professors.

# The Data

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- Part of a larger study examining student evaluation at a large Midwestern public university
  - This portion of the study draws on 178,313 evaluations
  - from 2008 and 2011
  - completed on-line at the end of each semester.
- Today: patterns and direct quotations

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# Findings

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Student wrote positive  
and negative reviews  
for women professors



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and men professors.

# Findings cont'd

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However, women professors received far more evaluations about their emotional labor than male colleagues.





# Both men and women professors:

## Comments about the course

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- “The in-class writing assignments based on the readings help my writing ability.”
- “Exams should all be worth the same amount of points.”
- “Altogether I felt like I learned a lot from this class. Certain sections were better but all together it was a good class.”



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# Both men and women professors:

## Comments about the person

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- “Answers emails quickly.
- “I learned a lot from him.”
- “The professor was available frequently and stressed the importance of grammar. [sic]”

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# Women Professors: Emotional Labor

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- In addition to what students wanted from men professors, students wanted women professors to perform on-going emotional labor.
  - Friendly and likeable
  - Encourages and enables students
  - Understanding, caring, and kind

# Friendly and Likeable

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- “She provides useful feedback and is very nice and easy to talk to.”
- “Always nice, friendly, accessible, and always laughing which helps relax classroom.”

# Encouraging and enabling students

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- “She is very prepared and I like how encouraging she is.”
- “Being understanding like she was, was very helpful. It helped me to openly ask questions and not be embarrassed.”

<http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/advancegr/2013/presentations/3>





# Understanding, caring, and kind

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- “She cared about each one of her students, in class and out.”
- “She makes everyone feel like their opinion is valued.”
- “Very polite and understanding. EverReady to answer all types of questions.”

# Must be pretty (only from male students)

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- “Be less beautiful so I can focus.”
- “She is beautiful and she is very kind to everybody in our class. She smiles all the time.”
- “You are a beautiful woman and I can see that you get flustered in class. If nothing else, I loved having you lecture the class and would enjoy being a personal friend of yours outside the class.”



“She’s hot!”

# Criticism

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- “Be outgoing and happy, I think it makes the class fun and people want to learn more and worker harder when someone is fun to be with.”
- “I think it would have killed her to smile just once.”
- “Try to be attractive.”



- These are not necessarily bad attributes.

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- But student expectations of women professors' emotional labor constitute an additional demand about which men professors need not worry.

- <http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/advancegsr/2013/presentations/3> Could impact promotion.



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